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5 of 5
PARENTAL ADVISORY

Soul Survivors

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PERKINS

MARTIN

STEPHEN KING THE STAND

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PREVIOUSLY IN THE STAND

It's been over five weeks since a deadly, flu-like virus swept through the world, killing 99% of the country's population. The people who are left are tasked with living in a world they no longer understand. But, slowly, the world is moving on, and the survivors are no longer asking "what now?" but rather, "what next?"

Now, propelled by dreams of an old woman who calls herself Mother Abigail, disparate groups of survivors are making their way west. The first group is led by the reluctant Nick Andros, a deaf-mute who lost an eye during the madness that gripped the world along with the super-flu. They are the first to arrive at the shack belonging to Mother Abigail, deep in a cornfield in Nebraska.

The other group slowly making its way west includes Stu Redman, the pregnant Frannie Goldsmith and Harold Lauder. They have met many people along their journey, including the sociology professor Glen Bateman, but more importantly, a romance has grown between Frannie and Stu—a romance that infuriates Harold.

It has been a bone-achingly exhausting journey for the survivors of the super-flu, but like all things these days, this journey appears to have no end in sight...



HEMMINGFORD HOUSE.

There was little talk during the meal, mostly just grunts of pleasure, then Ralph Bretner declared:

That was one dilly of a meal, ma'am. I can't remember when anything hit the spot so good. Thanks are in order.

Can I come and sit with, gramm'lady?

Oh, Gina, honey, I think you'd be too heavy.

Nonsense, Olivia. The day I can't take a little one on my lap is the day they wind me in a shroud. Come on over, Gina.

Now tell me what happened to your leg.

I broke it when I fell out of a barn.

Pick fixed it. Ralph says Pick saved my life.

Nick, Tom Cullen, and Ralph happened on Dick Ellis halfway across Kansas.

Dick had been a veterinarian in his previous life.

The next day, passing through Undeborg, they heard the faintest cries coming from the south side of town.

If the wind had been blowing the other way...



Gina had been on her own for three weeks when the rotting floorboards in her uncle's barn gave way beneath her.

They found her a day after her fall, and though Dick had been pessimistic about her chances, she bounced back with a speed that surprised them all.



I suspect her condition, when we found her, had as much to do with loneliness as anything else.

'Course it did.

If you'd missed her, she would have just pined away.

*It started raining,
so they moved to
the kitchen.*

*Mother Abigail lit
three oil-lamps to
push back the dusk.*

*Maybe the
old ways are
best.*

*I only mean...
that's the first
home-cooked meal
I've had since, well,
June thirtieth,
I guess.*

*My wife,
Helen, now
she could...
She...*

*For a moment, they all listened to the rain.
Alone, it would have been a desolate sound.
In company, it was a secret sound, closing
them in together.*

*Thunder muttered,
but far away, back
over Iowa.*

*Gina yawned,
her eyes wide
and glassy.*

*That was
the cue.*

*Tom Cullen's tired.
M-O-O-N, that
spells tired.*

Hearty thanks were made again, sleeping arrangements were decided upon, and then it was just the three of them.

Looking at Nick, Mother Abigail felt a quiet sense of knowledge and completion.



At one end of her life, there had been her father, John Freemantle, tall and black and proud...



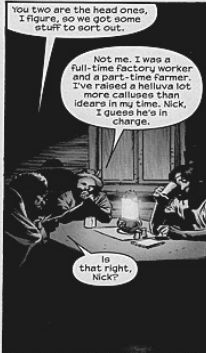
...at the other end, this man: young, white, and mute, with that one, brilliant expressive eye.



You two are the head ones, I figure, so we got some stuff to sort out.

Not me. I was a full-time factory worker and a part-time farmer. I've raised a helluva lot more calluses than idears in my time. Nick, I guess he's in charge.

Is that right, Nick?



He wrote his answer:

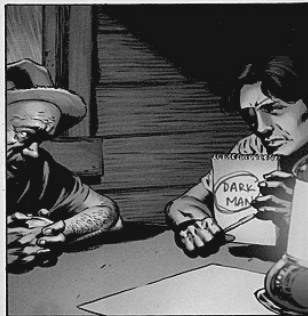
IT WAS MY
IDEA TO COME
UP THIS WAY
YES
ABOUT
IN THREE
I DON'T KNOW.



Have you seen other folks on your travels?

We've *heard* things, like motorcycles. And it *feels* like we've been watched. So there are other people around. We think what scares them away is seeing a fairly big group all together.





INTERLUDE.

It isn't--
the flu, is it,
Harold?

No, it's
nothing like
the flu.

Is it food
poisoning?

None of us *know*,
Fran, Glen thinks it
might be Mark's
appendix.

PERION MCCARTHY AND MARK BRADDOCK.

*Lovers who'd joined their
party a few days before.*

You've got
to help him, Glen.
You've got to do
something. You can't
let him die.

If it keeps
hurting as bad
as this...I'd
rather be
dead...

We gave him
some aspirin,
Payne, for what
it's worth.

Hopefully
it's his bowels.
Too much
roughage.

He wouldn't
be running a fever
if it was his bowels.
And his belly wouldn't
be swollen that
way.

*Fran felt dread rise in her like
a black column. There wasn't
a doctor or nurse among them,
and if it was Mark's appendix...*

What are
we going to
do?

*She was thinking of her
baby now. What if it has
to be a cesarean birth?*

Maybe, if it *is*
his appendix, we ought
to try...well, operating
on him.





It's his appendix, no doubt about it.

But we'd kill him if we tried to operate on him ourselves. You know that, Harold.

He'll die if we don't try.



Even if we could open him up without having him bleed to death, we wouldn't know his appendix from his pancreas. Not to mention, what would we use?

The nearest hospital is back in...Maumee.



We move him, his appendix bursts and dumps enough poison into his system to kill ten men.

But Harold's right. If we don't do anything, he'll die.



Behind them, as if on cue, Mark screamed in pain like some kind of horrible prophet...



It shouldn't be like this...

Having your appendix out is supposed to be nothing!

Maybe in the old days... but it's something now.

HEMMINGFORD HOUSE.

I've been told, in a dream, by the Lord God...



I started having dreams two years before this plague fell on us. I've always dreamed, and sometimes my dreams have come true...



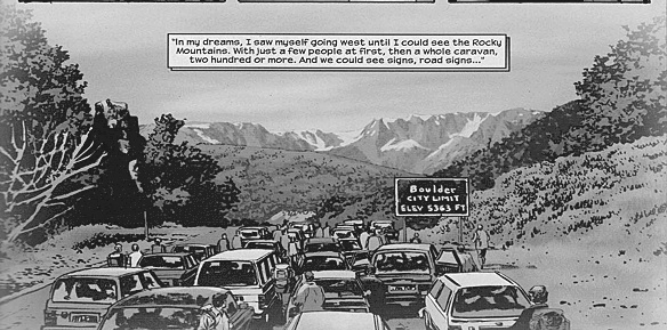
Prophecy is the gift of God and everyone has a smidge of it...



My own grandmother used to call it the shining lamp of God, sometimes just the shine...

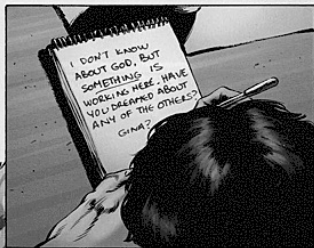


"In my dreams, I saw myself going west until I could see the Rocky Mountains. With just a few people at first, then a whole caravan, two hundred or more. And we could see signs, road signs..."



I always felt someone special would come to me, and that's how I'd be in the way of knowing the time to move had come, and...

...It's *you*, Nick. God has put his finger on *your* heart.



I DON'T KNOW ABOUT GOD, BUT SOMETHING IS WORKING HERE. HAVE YOU DREAMED ABOUT ANY OF THE OTHERS? GINA?



Not any of the ones who came with you, but...



"A man who doesn't talk much... A young woman who is with child... A man who comes to me with a guitar of his own."

HOW MUCH DO YOU KNOW ABOUT THE DARK MAN?



He ain't Satan, but he
and Satan have kept
their councils together
of old...

"He's the purest evil
left in the world..."

The rest of the bad is *little* evil.
Shoplifters and sexfiends and
people who like to use their fists.
But he'll call them. He's already
started. He's getting them together
a lot faster than we are...

"Not just the evil ones, but the
weak ones, the lonely ones...the
ones that have let God out
of their hearts..."



MAYBE HE'S NOT
REAL.
MAYBE HE'S JUST...
THE BAD, SCARED
PART OF US ALL !!!

You dreamed of me, and ain't I real? And I dreamed of you. And praise God, you're sitting right there.

He's as real as you or I.

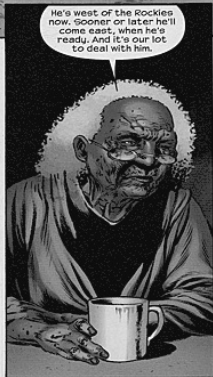


"The Bible don't say what happened to Noah's family after the flood went down. But I wouldn't be surprised if there was some awful tussle for the souls of those people.

"And I wouldn't be surprised if that's what was in store for us..."



He's west of the Rockies now. Sooner or later he'll come east, when he's ready. And it's our lot to deal with him.



Oh, yes. There's bitter days ahead. Death and terror, betrayal and tears.

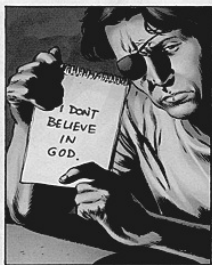
And not all of us will be alive to see how it ends.



I don't like any of this. Aren't things hard enough without this guy you and Nick are talking about?

It's God's way. He don't explain to the likes of Abby Freemantle.





THE NEXT DAY



How is he, Peri?



Sleeping. The others have gone to Kunkle, to look for a doctor's office, to get some books and... instruments.



We're really sorry...

I guess that doesn't sound like much, but we really are.

I know that. This is no one's fault.

Unless there's a God, of course, then it's His fault.

They'd met in Albany, Peri had told Frannie, on the last day of June. Almost immediately, they decided to travel together. She had begun to love him, a little more each day, and now this...



He was good to me, Fran.

So very... very... kind to me.

Perion...



...we'll try our best.

7/18/33 13-15
HEMINGGARD HOUSE.

The day they spent at Abby Freemantle's place was the best any of them could remember since the super-flu had drawn away, like the waters going down from Mount Ararat.

Tom Cullen, for instance, spent the day racing through the corn, scaring up droves of crows.



Gina McCone played with a set of paper dolls Abigail had found in her bedroom closet.



The women, Olivia and June, spent the day in the kitchen, cooking...



...while Mother Abigail took Pick and Ralph to the Stoners' farm to get a pig for supper.

Better let me, boys, she's sure to be a quasher.



Conspicuously absent was Nick, who'd taken off to be by himself.



Abigail knew what the boy was wrestling with, and her heart went out to him...

MEANWHILE

Stu?

It's here! There's the little bastard, right there!

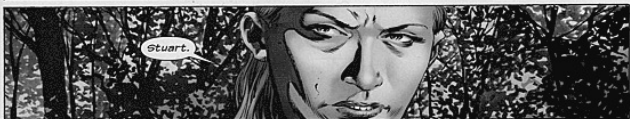
Fran, show me the other diagram again! Quick! Quick!

Can you take it out, Stu? Sweet Texas, do you think you can?

Stu?

I don't know, Glen, it's self-containing above and below, the appendix, it's--

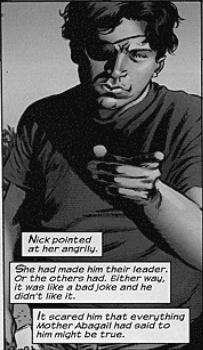
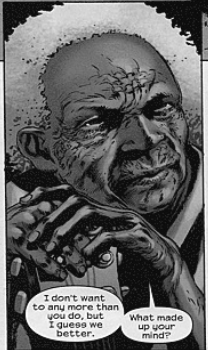
Wipe my forehead, Fran, I'm sweating like a pig!



**AFTER NINE
O'CLOCK.**

They were all on the porch, chatting and laughing, when Nick rejoined them.

Conversation broke off, as if they had been marking time, waiting for him.



DAWN, THE NEXT DAY.

Stu...?

I was dreaming again,
about the Park Man
and the old
woman...

We were
wrong, she's not
in Colorado, she's
getting ready
to go to
Colorado...

Oh,
Frannie...

What is
it? What's
wrong?

I woke up,
from the dreams,
and...it's Perion.

She got to
the Veronal in
Glen's pack and...
she's dead,
Fran.



Lord,
what a
mess...

I guess I've
got to wake the
others up and
tell them...



The last morning at Hemmingford House, everyone was up early and busy.

Nick, king of the written notes, hammered one up in front of Mother Abigail's.

WE HAVE GONE TO
BOULDER, COLORADO.
WE ARE TAKING
SECONDARY ROADS
TO AVOID TRAFFIC
JAMS
CITIZEN'S
BROAD
CHANNEL IL



Do you know, Nick, my daddy once owned all this land for miles around? It's true...

And I played my guitar down at the Grange Hall in nineteen and oh-two. Long ago. Long, long ago...



Oh, Nick, I have harbored hate of the Lord in my heart...





"Abby," the Lord says to me, "There's work for you far up ahead. So I'll let you live, until your flesh is bitter on your bones..."



"I'll let you see your daddy's land taken away piece by piece. I'll let you see your children die ahead of you..."



"And in the end, your reward will be to go away with strangers from all you love best and to die in a strange land with the work not yet finished. That's *My* will," says He.



"Thy will be done," says I, and in my heart, I curse Him and ask, "Why, why, why?"



Nick marveled that there could be so many tears in such an old woman, who seemed as dry and thin as a dead twig.

Help me along, Nick...

I only want to do what's right...



At one o'clock, after lunch, they packed up.

Half of them would ride in the wrecker Dick and Ralph had found in Columbus; half in the new Dodge van; a CB radio crackling between them.



As they rattled off, driving west on Route 30, Abigail Freemantle did not look back once and she did not cry.

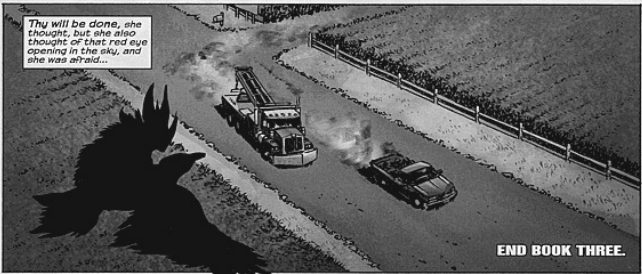
Her crying was done.



She was set in the center of the Lord's will...and He will would be done...



Thy will be done, she thought, but she also thought of that red eye opening in the sky, and she was afraid...



END BOOK THREE.

STEPHEN KING
THE STAND

SOUL
SURVIVORS



AFTERWORD

The Long and Winding Road

by Mike Perkins

Reflections of working on *The Stand*
at the halfway point



Starting out:

Before this adaptation I'd never tackled a project of this length—30 issues, breaking down into six series of five issue arcs—and I openly relished the challenge—I still do. Sure, I had worked on long-running projects before, primarily *Ruse* at CrossGen and *Captain America* here at Marvel, but this one was going to be different: a long run at an adaptation of an already well-known and well respected novel. It was best not to think about that—to take into consideration the pre-conceptions of the millions of readers who have devoured *The Stand* in novel form would have sent me second-guessing myself at best...going insane with worry at worst! We all have our own ideas of

how characters should look and so I decided to just take it right from the source material and follow Mr. King's vivid descriptions; and I was so relieved when the esteemed author made it known that he was pleased with the initial studies. One of the other concerns, perhaps the most difficult, was just plain keeping my mouth shut. Don't misunderstand me; I'm the soul of discretion and can keep secrets like the Sphinx, but the sheer excitement of working on this project was making me fit to burst and, believe it or not, it took over half a year before I was initially approached until I could actually start working on *The Stand* due to contract considerations. There's nothing more frustrating to an interviewer when they're told "I'm working on something



really exciting but I can't tell you what it is, yet!" When the word was finally out, there was a huge weight lifted from off my shoulders.

First Release

I knew that the adaptation of *The Stand* would garner huge interest, and I was somewhat prepared for that but, even so, I was taken aback by the sheer amount of interview requests and other related promotional aspects of the new release. I tried to answer all subsequent questions from multiple sources—including the ever recurrent "Have you met Stephen King?"—so, if I happened to not get around to any requests from anyone out there, please forgive me. I had to draw at some point!

One of the moments that sticks out so vividly in my memories was the midnight signing at Midtown Comics, right near Times Square. Who would have thought that this boy from Bushbury, Wolverhampton, would be signing copies of his illustrated comic—a Stephen King adaptation no less—in Manhattan?! Many thanks to all who turned up and to everyone who took part and helped out. Massive thanks to Lauren Sankovitch's housemate who made cookies and to John Dokes for inviting me to the Swing Jazz club (where he was singing and dancing) before the signing—it enhanced the whole evening and the energy from that place kept me going far longer than the midnight signing went on.

The Toughest Page

Any project is not without its difficult patches. Mine were of a more personal nature and were expanded upon by the pages I was working on at the time although, because of that, those pages are forever forefront in my mind. The toughest pages to draw were pages 17 and 18 of the fourth issue of *Captain Trips*. This is when Fran's father is telling her about her Mom's sickness and they sorrowfully hold each other in the rain. I happened to be inking those pages a day or two before my own dear Dad's funeral and my own heart was breaking when illustrating Fran's grief. A tough time...but my dad had a wondrous life and was loved by all who knew him.



The Tunnel

Ever since reading the novel, I'd been looking forward to illustrating the tunnel scene, as well as the moments preceding it. So much so, in fact, that when I was in New York for the launch signings, I took numerous photos of the route Larry took from Central Park to the Lincoln Tunnel entrance. I HAD to get it right and the exact reference





helped immeasurably. I've also taken many, many photographs of Boulder, Colorado, as some of our cast spend a fair amount of time there and I feel it all has to be accurate.

Life imitating Art

So there I am—illustrating the continued outbreak of the flu that came to be known as Captain Trips. Following the virus escalating as it spreads across the world. I listen to a lot of radio when I'm working (as well as audiobooks... in fact, I've listened to a staggering amount of audiobooks by the aforementioned Mr. Stephen King while I've been working on *The Stand*—I'm halfway through

Black House as I write this!) and so I was getting more and more unsettled as the H1N1 virus—or Swine Flu—became an epidemic and then quickly graduated to developing into a pandemic!! Sure, there have always been dangerous viruses floating around and some of them make the news to the point of almost panic-mongering but none have happened when I've been illustrating the same things occurring at the same time! Gah!! Good job I was locked in my room and was simply too busy to actually go out anywhere!

A sidenote

Illustrating *The Stand* has been one of the highlights of my career



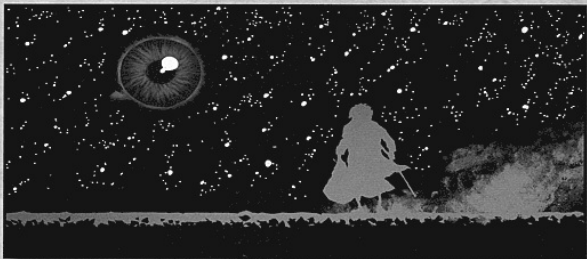
and I should take this opportunity to thank all those involved—in particular the amazingly talented Roberto Aguirre-Sacasa and the stunningly amazing Laura Martin. We couldn't have done it without the words from Chris Eliopoulos and Rus Wooton. Massive thanks, in equal measure, goes to the encouragements and smart-ass comments from the editorial team of Bill Rosemann, Lauren Sankovitch, Michael Horwitz, Charlie Beckerman, Nate Cosby and Lauren Henry—led by their incomparable svengali Mr. Ralph Macchio. Thanks to all the marketing and publicity guys and kisses and hugs to the boys and girls who put the beautiful collections together. I also have numerous thanks and immeasurable gratitude to give to the originator of the work I'm illustrating, Mr. Stephen King, as well as his second-in command on this adaptation, Mr. Verrill.

As much of a highlight as it has been, it is duly outshone by the

arrival of my daughter, Natalia, in December of 2009. Thank you to my wife, Izabella, not only for our beautiful girl but also for the continued support you give to me in order for me to follow my dreams.

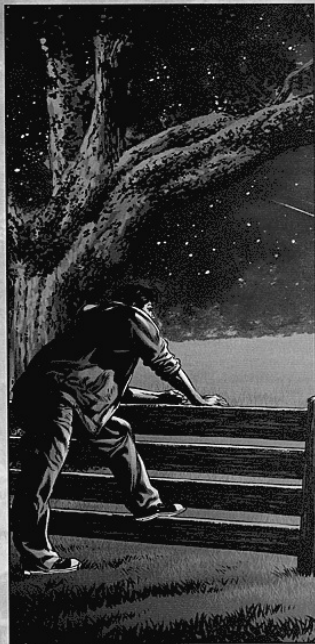
In conclusion

Before you start thinking this sounds like a wrapping-up speech let me remind you, faithful reader, that we still have a long road ahead of us. Just some of the highlights I'm looking forward to are: the mountain pass... with wolves, growing tension in Boulder... an increasingly unstable Harold... Nadine's "origin" story... the trek over the Rockies and, of course, Flagg in Vegas. Oh! There's SO much more to come!! Stick around... and take The Stand!!



REFLECTIONS ON FIFTEEN ISSUES

by: Roberto Aguirre-Sacasa



Wow. Halfway done. 15 issues into our thirty-issue run, and Harold Lauder and Larry Underwood still haven't crossed paths yet. (Soon, not next issue, but the one after next.) Frannie has started to show, but only a little bit. Flagg's begun to play his hand, but you ain't seen nothin' yet. And by the way, we're still meeting new people. (Up next: The Kid, and if you've only read Stephen King's first published version of *The Stand*, the version I read when I was twelve—before the uncut edition became the definitive edition—you're in for a treat; Trashcan Man isn't, but you are.)

In the roughly two years (!) I've been working on this epic adaptation, a lot has changed for me—personally and, well, worldwide. But one thing has remained constant: No matter what I'm doing, no matter where I go, my battered paperback copy of *The Stand* is always with me, in my backpack. (And it is battered, literally being held together by duct tape at this point.) Meaningfully marked-up. ("End of Issue Three? Cut this?" scrawled in the margins). It's become my talisman, my constant companion.

Once, when I left it behind on a Jet Blue flight from JFK to Burbank (or was it Burbank to JFK?), I was bereft for a solid week (seriously, I couldn't sleep)...until the book showed up in my mailbox, sent to me by a good Samaritan who must've found it, seen my name and address (which, thank God, I wrote on the inside front cover), and went that extra mile. (Whoever you are, if you're reading this, thank you.)

And speaking of thank yous... I know we have 15 more issues to go (!), two years' worth of work left, but only God and Mother Abigail know if we'll all be crossing the finish line together, so let me take this opportunity to thank at least some of the people who work on this book to make it great:

Editors past and current: Ralph Macchio, Mike Horwitz, Charlie Beckerman, Bill Roseman, Nate Cosby, and Lauren Sankovitch. (If I'm forgetting someone, you'll never know, because one of these fine people will tell me, I'm sure.) Class acts all around. Smart, funny, and extremely understanding when it comes to things like juggling a crazy television writing schedule. (How many times can one man say, "Soon, as soon as Big Love's on hiatus, it'll be better," before he's shot by his editor? Seriously; I'm asking...)

Cover artist Lee Bermejo. We never spoke, and I understand you may be moving on to other projects, but thank you, Lee, you will be missed.

Goes without saying: Mike Perkins and Laura Martin. Genius and genius.

And, finally, Stephen King, for these characters and this story. It's an honor to be one of their many custodians at Marvel, even for a little while.

And actually, one more thank you: To the people who read the book, every month, no matter what else is going on. Thanks for joining the ride.

See you in Vegas in fifteen—
Roberto Aguirre-Sacasa

Issue 5 cover inks by Lee Bermejo.



Next: "He's a hard baby, but The Kid has handled hard babies before. You believe that happy crappy?"



"If you've got a fever for riveting graphic fiction based on the biggest pop novelist of all time, the prescription is more Captain Trips."

--Rachel Molino, WIZARD MAGAZINE



The end is nigh as a deadly plague sweeps the nation and widespread panic overcomes the dying masses of America in a terrifying and inexorable tide. Who will be left to rebuild on the ruins of their past lives as the ancient rivalry of Good vs. Evil has only just begun?

Based on the popular apocalyptic novel by celebrated author Stephen King, *The Stand* brings together critically acclaimed writer Roberto Aguirre-Sacasa (*Sensational Spider-Man*, *Angel: Revelations*, HBO's *Big Love*) and the gritty visuals of artist Mike Perkins (*Captain America*) to tell a tale which begins at the end of the world.

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